



## Congressman Greg Walden

Remarks before the House of Representatives

January 22, 2007

# JOSEPHINE COUNTY, OR

THE IMPACT OF CONGRESS'S FAILURE TO ACT ON THE  
SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT

Mr. Speaker. The failure of Congress to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act results in a broken promise to over 600 forested counties across America.

Surely you remember the frantic search last month for James Kim and his family in the federal forests of southern Oregon. Josephine County relied on critical emergency resources in this heart-breaking effort. 90% of the county's search and rescue budget has been funded by this federal program which has not been reauthorized.

Likewise, the County utilizes an emergency phone notification system to alert homeowners to disasters and emergencies. They used it during the search for the Kim family.

65% of Josephine County's land base is federal. When disaster strikes, quick information and response is a matter of life and death. Failure to reauthorize means these county services may not be funded, and that's outrageous.

Josephine County Commissioner Dave Toler said the loss of this program "is about more than numbers, its loss will change our lives in every way for many more years to come."

My colleagues, it's high time that Congress reauthorize this Act and keep the word of the Federal Government to timbered communities.